

# COUNCIL ON RECYCLING

c/o Planning and Evaluation Section  
Bureau of Waste Management  
Department of Natural Resources  
Box 7921  
Madison, Wisconsin 53707  
608/267-7566

October 18, 2004

The Honorable Mark Miller  
Representative, 48th Assembly District  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Miller:

RE: Council's comments on AB 877 on the management of computers and other electronics

In follow-up to your meeting with the Council on Recycling last March on legislation for the management of discarded computers and other electronics, the Council is pleased to provide you with the following comments for your consideration.

As you know, the Council had previously had a task force that met for 18 months on this issue. The task force, which included a broad representation of interests, had provided recommendations to the Council, and the Council adopted a list of recommendations in the fall of 2002, which are attached. New members were appointed to the Council in 2003 and the management of discarded computers and electronics was again selected as a priority topic. After meeting with you in March, the Council has worked on its consideration and recommendations on your legislation at its May, July and September meetings

During this process, the Council both re-affirmed its previous recommendations and recommend that, rather than the detailed requirements for the individual producers to develop recycling plans and the standards for collection/recycling programs, the legislation instead require the establishment of a third party organization (TPO) to set up a system for a take-back and recycling program, and that each manufacturer pay the fees established by the TPO for the receipt and collection of the covered electronics unless the manufacturer develops an equivalent system.

We note that similar programs already exist for the entire US for mercury thermostats and for rechargeable batteries, and that such programs exist for electronics in Norway and Sweden, and several western Canadian provinces for motor oil and automotive oil filters. The TPO and any manufacturer which opts to go on its own should be required to file reports with the state annually.

Second, we support the requirement that manufacturers provide funding to the state for state oversight of the program.

Third, we recommend intensive and extensive education programs to both the household sector and the non-household sector on the requirements to keep electronic scrap out of landfills and on the opportunities for recycling. This responsibility should be placed on the manufacturers or the third party organization, although they can contract with other entities for the performance of this work.

Fourth, in addition to our prior recommendation on state purchasing, we also recommend that the purchasing requirements of the state include provisions for the "Design for the Environment" with certification of sellers in accordance with nationally recognized standards. An example of such standards is attached.

And finally – and perhaps most important in the long run – we stress our recommendation that the Legislature and the Governor encourage Congress to develop legislation for a national electronics recycling program.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and your patience with the length of time it has taken us to get back to you. We look forward to working on this issue in the next legislative session.

Sincerely,

John Reindl  
Chair